

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 061689
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

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-----191811Z 011888 /41

R 190951Z MAR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA
INFO CHUSMTM

S E C R E T STATE 061689

EXDIS, CHUSMTM HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, US

SUBJECT: MOBILE ASSAULT BRIDGES

1. FYI: UNDER FMS CASE DA UTN, ACCEPTED BY SAG ON
SEPTEMBER 21, 1976, USG AGREED SELL HEAVY-CLASS FLOATING
BRIDGES (LINE ITEMS 68, 69, 71, AND 72) AND MOBILE ASSAULT
BRIDGES (MABS) (LINE ITEMS 88 THROUGH 92). AS THERE ARE
NO RIVERS IN SAUDI ARABIA, THERE APPEARS TO BE NO SAUDI
DEFENSIVE REQUIREMENT FOR SUCH EQUIPMENT. (DRY WADI
CROSSINGS CAN BE MADE USING TANK CHASSIS SCISSOR BRIDGES,
WHICH ALREADY ON ORDER.) SAG HAD NOT SPECIFICALLY
REQUESTED FLOATING BRIDGES AND MABS BUT HAD RATHER ASKED
IN GENERAL TERMS FOR ENTIRE STANDARDIZED INVENTORY FOR
U.S. SEPARATE MECHANIZED INFANTRY BRIGADE. OUR INCLUSION
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OF MABS IN SALES CASE WAS ESSENTIALLY AN OVERSIGHT WHICH
WOULD BE EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY AS A LEGITIMATE
SAUDI DEFENSE NEED. (MABS HAVE ALREADY BEEN DENIED TO
ISRAEL AND EGYPT). FORTUNATELY, NO PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS
HAVE BEEN LET AND THUS NO CANCELLATION COSTS WILL ENSUE
IF SALES CASE CANCELLED. END FYI.

2. REQUEST EMBASSY (OR CHUSMTM, IF EMBASSY PREFERS) INFORM APPROPRIATE SAG AUTHORITIES THAT WE WANT TO CANCEL ORDER FOR THIS PARTICULAR EQUIPMENT SINCE OUR INCLUDING IT WITH OTHER STANDARD EQUIPMENT WAS AN OVERSIGHT. YOU MAY ADD THAT SAG HAD NOT ASKED SPECIFICALLY FOR THIS EQUIPMENT BUT RATHER FOR ENTIRE INVENTORY OF STANDARD U.S. MECHANIZED INFANTRY BRIGADE. SINCE SAUDIS' REQUIREMENT FOR DRY WADIS WAS ALREADY BEING MET BY TANK CHASSIS SCISSOR BRIDGES, WE SHOULD HAVE NOTED THERE WAS NO POSSIBLE DEFENSIVE NEED FOR MABS. HENCE WAS ARE LOATHE TO SELL 13.6 MILLION DOLS. IN UNNEEDED EQUIPMENT.

3. IF YOU ANTICIPATE THAT SUCH NOTIFICATION TO SAG WOULD CREATE PROBLEM, PLEASE HOLD UP ON NOTIFICATION AND INFORM DEPARTMENT ACCORDINGLY. OTHERWISE, INFORM DEPARTMENT OF SAG REACTION.
VANCE

SECRET

NNN

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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